

MT
10
D18s

A
A
0
0
0
0
4
7
2
0
8
4

SOME ESSENTIALS
IN THE
TEACHING OF MUSIC

FRANK DAMROSCH



California
Regional
Facility

G. SCHIRMER

LONDON

NEW YORK

BOSTON

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES





SOME ESSENTIALS
IN
THE TEACHING *of* MUSIC

SOME ESSENTIALS
IN
THE TEACHING *of* MUSIC

*For the Consideration of
Music-Teachers, Music-Students and Parents*

By
FRANK DAMROSCH, Mus. Doc.
Director, Institute of Musical Art of the
City of New York

• • ,
•

G. SCHIRMER
NEW YORK

• BOSTON

Copyright, 1916, by
G. SCHIRMER
26460

ALW 3-13 41
MUSIC

NT 10
D18
c.p.1

1940

7 BOOKHUNTERS

TO JAMES LOEB,
the rare music-lover who understands,
this book is dedicated
in friendship and appreciation
by the Author.

338912

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
CHAPTER I	
PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT OF FACULTIES NECESSARY TO THE STUDY OF MUSIC	5
CHAPTER II	
THE TRAINING OF THE MIND-EAR	30
CHAPTER III	
INTERPRETATION:	74
1. MUSICAL FORM	
2. MUSICAL CONTENT	
CHAPTER IV	
HOW TO STUDY	84
CHAPTER V	
CORRELATION OF PRACTICAL WITH THEORETICAL WORK	92
CHAPTER VI	
PEDAGOGIC MATERIAL	94
CONCLUSION	99

INTRODUCTION

It is doubtful whether there is any subject of instruction which is taught so carelessly, so ignorantly, so improperly, and by so many people who are by nature and by training unfit to teach, as music. Thousands of people who have learned to play or sing a little, barely enough to perform a few pieces more or less acceptably, consider this a sufficient qualification to teach music. It seems to them an easy way of earning a living and, while the State exacts the attainment of definite standards in Normal training in all other subjects, they know that no such standards are established in the teaching of music and that they can offer themselves to the public with impunity. The ignorance of the public makes it easy and safe to impose themselves as competent and, by dint of advertising, personal influence and acquaintance and by offering cheap service, they often manage to assemble large classes of pupils.

But even the better trained musicians, equipped with ample musical and technical ability, frequently enter upon the career of teaching with an imperfect knowledge of true educational principles. They start with the

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

idea that they need only pass on to others what they themselves have acquired, employing the same methods and material, not knowing that good teaching means the development of the pupil from within, the recognition of his inherent qualities and their development along lines of natural growth. Such teachers are prone to study this or that "method" which, whether good, bad or indifferent, when applied indiscriminately to all pupils is bound to be a misfit in many cases.

As stated before, these conditions are to a great extent due to the ignorance of the public. Some parents will engage a "cheap teacher" to begin with, not realizing that this is the most important period of the child's development and that a faulty or insecure foundation will prevent future progress and will lead to certain disappointment and discouragement. Parents of another class will start at the other extreme, in the belief that only a teacher of great reputation is good enough to teach their children. Such a teacher may be excellent for advanced pupils, but may not be at all interested in the early formative processes of musical development; and again much money will be wasted with little result.

These parents do not realize that an artist-teacher is worthy an artist-pupil and that, until this stage has been reached, instruction

Introduction

should be given by one who is in sympathy with the child-mind and who understands the principles upon which rests the development of the physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties. ✓

It is important, therefore, that those who look upon teaching as an art, not as a trade, should study this art of teaching as a specific part of their equipment, without which their musical talent, ability to perform, and knowledge of musical science, can never produce satisfactory results.

This little book was written in the hope of giving helpful aid to those who aim to become true teachers, and, as the text has been kept as free as possible from technical terms, it may also prove of service to parents. For, unless the parent understands to some extent the plan and purpose of the teacher's work, the coöperation which is so desirable and helpful cannot be established.

It should not be necessary to state that a knowledge of the contents of this treatise is not sufficient to make a good music-teacher. He must be a person of culture and good breeding; well educated; a good musician, able to play or sing with ample technical skill, accuracy, intelligence and taste; thoroughly grounded in the theory of music; equipped with a wide knowledge of musical literature and

acquainted with the standard compositions in every field of musical art; and, finally, he must have high art-ideals and be able to arouse and maintain them in his pupils.

So prepared, if he will follow out the suggestions contained in these pages, he may not be able to create a Kreisler, a Paderewski, or a Sembrich, but he will at least develop each pupil to the highest point of musical and artistic excellence of which he is capable; and if, in one of his pupils, there should be the germ of a great artist, it will stand a better chance of reaching maturity than when left to the haphazard methods of teaching so common all over the world.

If, on the other hand, the pupil has only moderate talent, he will at least grow into an intelligent music-lover who can understand and truly appreciate good music well performed; and that, too, will "fill a long-felt want."

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT OF FACULTIES NECESSARY TO THE STUDY OF MUSIC.

The teaching of any subject involves three processes: The creation of interest in the subject, the development of the physical and mental faculties necessary to its mastery, and the comprehension of its scope and of its relation and application to life. In the teaching of an art-subject there enters a fourth process, namely, the development and culture of certain psychic faculties required for its proper apprehension and expression.

Processes
of teaching

These processes will be discussed in their relation to the teaching of music as an art; but it must be understood that, while they will be treated separately, their practical application is not consecutive but simultaneous, that is, all four processes must progress correlative from first to last, from the first lesson of the beginner to the most advanced study of the artist-student—namely, throughout life.

* *

*

The first process, the creation of interest, involves certain psychological problems. Stu-

Creation of
Interest

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

dents of music, especially those who begin very young, require careful study on the part of the teacher in order that he may find the proper starting-point that will enable him to secure the child's willing attention and co-operation. Broadly speaking, young music-students may be divided into two classes, those who have a natural bent for music spontaneously seeking expression, and those whose parents love music and wish their children to have music as part of their life-assets. Among the latter will be found every variety of aptitude and inaptitude; yet even the least promising children may, under good guidance, develop into intelligent music-lovers, if not into good musicians.

* *

*

Natural Talent

In the first class—those who have a natural bent for music—the awakening of interest will present little difficulty; but even here the teacher will be called upon to exercise careful discrimination in properly directing this interest toward true art-ideals. Children who have great facility in remembering tunes or in “picking out” melodies on the piano are prone to pick up most readily the jingles of the popular songs of the street, the sentimental maunderings of the lady in the next flat, or

Preliminary Development of Faculties

the ragtime of the phonograph. Therefore, the teacher's first problem will be to direct the child's interest into channels appropriate to his age and conducive to the development of his sense for beauty.

* *

*

In the second class the ingenuity of the teacher will often be severely taxed. The environment of the child may be devoid of musical influences, or, what is worse, may teem with bad influences. The first step, then, would be to find the subject in which the child is most interested and to bring this into relation with music. If the little girl is interested in her doll, sing or play a lullaby to put dolly to sleep, a waltz to let her dance. If the boy is interested in his drum, play a march. The numerous excellent publications of children's songs will supply material for practically all activities of the child, be they physical, mental or psychic; and the teacher of the young should have a thorough acquaintance with this literature and a goodly collection of it in his library.

* *

*

The teacher must endeavor at this stage of the child's musical development to introduce

**Moderate
musical
talent**

**Music in
the child's
life**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

music as part of his daily life—not as something separate and extraneous. This can, of course, be accomplished only if either the teacher or some member of the family competent to do so gives the child daily opportunity to express himself in music. This should not, as yet, take the form of “practice,” but should rather enter into the usual activities of the day, such as playing in the park, building a house with blocks, or looking at a picture-book.

* *

*

Creation
of interest
evolves
desire to
learn

We cannot successfully teach anything without the full coöperation of the student. It is for this reason that we must begin by creating an interest in the subject, and this interest will evolve that desire to learn, without which the best teacher's best efforts will be futile.

* *

*

Desire
to learn
breeds
effort

This desire breeds effort to acquire the object of desire, and herein the teacher will find the best helpmate in all his work. There remains only to provide the right kind of objective, and a start will have been made in the right direction.

Preliminary Development of Faculties

Let us now analyze the nature of this "effort," which we will assume to have been secured by creating a desire to learn through interest in the subject. Effort is either unconscious, induced by natural talent, or conscious, induced by an awakened interest, by acquired ability to accomplish, by a development of mind, body and spirit to make it a medium of self-expression. In its best form, effort is a combination of the conscious and unconscious activities. Unconscious effort usually requires restraint to avoid too rapid advancement along lines of least resistance; but with intelligent guidance it will prove to be the greatest stimulus to the development of conscious effort and all the activities which this involves in the training of the mind and the body.

Effort involves an appreciation of the object to be accomplished (this includes mental and psychical processes), the mastery of the technical means of expression by proper practice (physical), and the final act of self-expression through the musical medium selected.

* *

*

This effort at self-expression should be the keynote of all art-work. Without it, music may be pleasing, technically perfect and super-

Self-
expression

ficially attractive, but it will lack the deeper significance, the direct appeal to the emotions which is the result of sincere individual expression. Can this quality be taught? Undoubtedly, but only by one who is not a mere trainer, but a real educator, that is, one who knows how to develop his pupil from within. Perhaps it may help us to recognize the difference between a trainer and a teacher if we analyze their methods.

The trainer starts with a predetermined feat which the pupil is to perform in exactly the way in which the trainer believes it should be accomplished. He uses as his means chiefly imitation, repetition, and sometimes the reasoning faculties. The result at its best is a flawless copy of either his own work or of that of some master-performer.

The teacher, on the other hand, seeks from the beginning to let the pupil feel his way toward individual expression. This does not mean, however, that he is permitted to disfigure through ignorance and inexperience or through wilfulness music which in itself is beautiful when properly rendered; but it means that the pupil is caused to grow in such a way that his method of self-expression will be in harmony with art-principles and with the spirit of the composer. In other words, the true music-teacher must be something more than a mere

Preliminary Development of Faculties

teacher of music. He must know how to find and to awaken the spiritual qualities of the pupil, that is, to kindle the imagination, to arouse and stimulate his mental activity, to cultivate his taste and judgment, to strengthen and ennoble his character and to encourage and maintain his individuality.

* *

*

Art at its best is an expression of the spirit. The pursuit of an art without a proper development of the spiritual qualities is a failure from the start. It will be seen from this that the first music-lesson should not begin by teaching the notes or the names of the keys of the piano or the correct position of the hand on the keys. These things are necessary at the proper time and in the proper way, but more important things must be done first.

Develop-
ment of
spiritual
qualities

* *

*

The true teacher studies his pupil constantly, seeks for seeds in his mind and heart which should be made to sprout, and nurses them into flower. He skilfully adapts the pupil's musical activities to his spiritual, intellectual and physical capacity and in this way associates musical expression with his life-

Study of
pupil's
qualities

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

experiences in a natural manner, so that the pupil learns to use it as a means of self-expression.

* *
*

The teacher's task

It will be seen from this that the task of the music-teacher is not an easy one. On the contrary, it is most complex and exacting, and few—very few—who call themselves teachers have the qualities needed for this noblest profession. But it is also the most fascinating work when its problems and scope are rightly understood. To the true teacher every pupil and every moment of every lesson is interesting. He who looks upon teaching as drudgery is not a good teacher—is, indeed, no teacher.

* *
*

Channels of apprehension and expression

Let us now proceed to consider the channels through which music reaches our comprehension, and those through which we express ourselves in music; for it is these two processes of apprehension and expression which require constant cultivation.

The channels of apprehension are:

- a. Ear and eye (physical).
- b. Brain, intellect (mental).
- c. Emotions, spirit (psychical).

Preliminary Development of Faculties

The channels of expression are:

- a. Emotion (psychical).
- b. Brain (mental).
- c. Voice, fingers, etc. (physical).

* *

*

We apprehend music first through the ear or eye; i. e., sound-waves strike the tympanum of the ear, or light-waves, reflecting the symbols of musical sounds, strike the retina of the eye. These sensory impressions are communicated to the brain, and this brings them into consciousness and into orderly relationship. Finally, they reach the emotions, which respond to the spiritual qualities of the music.

Apprehension of music

* *

*

We give out music through the desire to communicate our emotions. The intellect determines the form and nature of expression, and the voice or fingers carry out the demands of the higher faculties.

Expression through music

* *

*

It will be seen that the two processes are carried out inversely. Apprehension takes place from the physical to the psychical, expression

Comparison of the two processes

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

from the psychical to the physical, while both proceed through the medium of the brain.

This should make clearer the teacher's task in giving equal attention to all the various processes, for if any of them are neglected an essential element will be omitted.

* *

*

Develop-
ment of
faculties
in accord
with Pestalozzian
principles

Having outlined the processes which enter into the reception and expression of music, let us consider how to develop the various faculties required to carry them out. Before doing this, however, it will be desirable to establish certain general pedagogical principles, first formulated by Pestalozzi as the basis of all correct teaching, which have stood the test of time and experience. While these have been universally applied in the general education of children, there has been little use made of them in the teaching of art-subjects, a fact which accounts to a great extent for the existing conditions in art-education.

* *

*

Cultivation
of faculties
in their
natural
order

The first of these general principles is: *Cultivate the faculties of the mind in their natural order.*

What is their natural order? First, the conscious apprehension of facts or phenomena through the medium of the senses; second, the

combination of such isolated impressions into intelligent forms of thought; third, the association of such forms of thought with others having one or more terms in common; fourth, the application of the thought-material so acquired to self-expression.

To illustrate: A child is taken to visit a small island. He is conscious of walking on dry land, and on completing the circuit of the island realizes that it is surrounded by water on all sides. He has therefore learned by two sensory impressions a fact which he is able to express in intelligent form to the effect that an island is a body of land entirely surrounded by water. Subsequent expeditions make him familiar with the different characteristics of peninsulas, mountains, rivers, etc., each of which he is able to associate with and differentiate from his former experiences, and thus to bring into orderly relation all the phenomena of physical geography. The knowledge so acquired will have become part of himself and can be applied by him in the form of individual thought, thereby becoming ing a means of self-expression.

* *

*

The second general principle is: *Lead the child to discover for himself. The child should do the work—the teacher lead.*

**The child
must dis-
cover for
himself**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

Taking the former illustration as an example, we must appreciate the superiority of a process whereby the physical facts and phenomena are discovered by the child through the senses, combined, under the guidance of the teacher, into intelligent thought and, again under guidance, formulated into general knowledge by inductive reasoning.

Knowledge based upon the experience of others is rarely accurate. Facts, be they ever so true, forced upon a mind which has had no previous experience with the elements upon which they are based, will appear in a distorted form upon the mental retina. Moreover, the child-mind cannot bring any thought-conceptions into sharp, clearly defined outlines until the experience of his senses teaches him the boundaries of time and space. And yet how many teachers are satisfied to pump "facts" into children which, at best, are taken on the faith that the teacher knows everything, but which, having no association with the child's experience, mean nothing to him.

* *

*

Proceed
from the
known to
the un-
known

The third general principle is: *Proceed from the known to the unknown; from the concrete to the abstract; from the particular to the general.*

Imagine that each point of knowledge, or

of ability to do, which is gained is a step upon which the child mounts, and which prepares and places the next step. In other words, knowledge is not developed from above, but from below. At the foundation are the elementary facts and phenomena discovered by the senses. These are brought into relation with each other by mental action, thereby establishing new thought-conceptions. This process is continued by various associations, comparisons, correlations and inferences, constantly evolving new thought-facts, each of which is based upon those previously derived from the acquired thought-material. Thus the child gradually illuminates the vast, dark cavern of the unknown by the light of the known facts which he has himself discovered.

Again, it will be seen that this knowledge is part of himself, ready to his use for self-expression whenever he requires it.

* *
*

With these three main principles of pedagogy established, we may now proceed to consider their application in the teaching of music. They are exceedingly simple—indeed, they sound like truisms—accepted by everybody as a matter of course, but their application requires the utmost concentration and

Application
of these
principles
in teaching
music

intelligent planning on the part of the teacher. Many consider them very useful in the elementary processes of education, but deny their applicability and usefulness for more advanced work. This position should be combated most emphatically, and this treatise may help to disprove its validity. It is true that the application of these principles requires more ingenuity, logical thought, and imagination, the more complex become the problems involving appreciation of the technical, intellectual and æsthetic elements entering into the work; but their correct solution depends upon the logical evolution of these principles, and avoidance or disregard of them is due simply to mental sloth and induces misconceptions and mechanical, inartistic results.

* *

*

How to
develop
interest

Our first problem is to develop the child's interest. In order to accomplish this we must first find out to what extent it has already been done through home influence or natural bent. The child-mind is like a mirror. It reflects the impressions received from its environment, causing the child to try to imitate the actions and sounds that come to its notice. Thus it has been frequently observed that

children whose mothers sing in the nursery will hum these tunes long before they have learned to talk correctly. The singing of good, simple songs to children in their earliest years is one of the most valuable means for inducing, not only a correct musical ear, but also a love for music as such. Wherever this is found to be the case, the work of the teacher will be comparatively easy. Unfortunately, it is rather the exception than the rule in America; and then the first step will be to supply this fundamental requirement.

* *

*

✓ The first vehicle of musical conception and of musical expression should be a song. It combines a concrete thought intelligible to the child with an appropriate tune that, so to speak, floats the words and enhances their meaning and their power to stir the imagination. Great care should be exercised in the selection of these songs in order that they may serve their purpose in interesting the child, in cultivating his taste and in training his ear to recognize correct musical relations. The child will learn the songs by his natural gift of imitation, but, as he will imitate not only the words and sounds of the tune, but also the

**Song the
first
vehicle
of musical
conception**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

tone-quality, enunciation of words, rhythm and other details, it will be seen how important it is that the example set by the teacher is of the best.

It does not matter at this stage whether the child is to learn to play the piano or the violin; his first step must be to learn to sing songs.

Why? Because, in order to develop his musical concepts from within, we must utilize the child's natural means of music-apprehension and expression, the ear and the voice, not the mechanical devices of piano-keys or strings which would distract his attention from the real thing. He will use these, his natural tools, unconsciously, and will therefore concentrate his attention on the song itself.

* *

*

Develop-
ment of
child's love
for music

It is to be remembered that our primary purpose for the present is not the specific cultivation of the voice or of the ear, but rather the development of the child's love and taste for good music. From the interest thus aroused we shall secure the strong desire to learn which will form the mainspring or motive-power in the more serious work to come. But even though we may be satisfied if the tones are sweet and pure, we cannot be too exacting in the creation of a keen recognition of true in-

tonation of pitch, for thereon hangs all future musical work, and any neglect at this most plastic stage in the child's development will cause much unnecessary trouble later.

* *

*

The ear is the channel through which all musical impressions reach the mind, and also the one through which the mind censors and controls the apparatus which produces our own musical expression. It is, therefore, obvious that the correct training and use of the ear must be the teacher's first and constant care.

**Training
of the ear
first step**

When we speak of the ear we do not mean the organ of hearing itself — whose physical perfection must be taken for granted — but the mental ear, that is, that part of the brain which receives aural impulses, stores them, registers them as noise or musical sounds, groups these into intelligible musical thoughts, conveys their emotional character to the feelings and, in short, brings all musical impressions to our consciousness.

* *

*

The processes of the ear are therefore manifold. In the apprehension of musical impres-

**Processes
performed
by the ear**

sions the physical ear receives and transmits them to the brain. If this is untrained, the impression will be superficial and evanescent. In the moment of reception there may be a feeling of sensual pleasure, but this disappears almost immediately and no conscious impression of the music which caused it remains. If the mind is trained, however, it becomes active the moment musical sounds impinge upon the recording brain-cells. It notes the nature and quality of the sounds, their pitch-relations to each other, their rhythmic grouping, accentuation and tempo; in short, it receives the musical message, understands it, and records it so that it may be recalled at pleasure, sometimes long after the first impression was received.

In musical expression the ear again plays an important part. Before the voice can utter a sound or the instrument produce a note, the brain-ear must first conceive it in the exact form as to pitch, duration, quality, etc., in which it is to appear as part of an intelligent musical thought. Then again, when uttered, the ear must be the critic which accepts or rejects the sound as fit to take its place in the succession of tones devised to express this thought. But not only this, it must anticipate utterance by a marvelous contrivance of subconscious cerebration, so that it compels

Preliminary Development of Faculties

the nerves and muscles of the tone-productive apparatus to meet exactly the form in which the brain has conceived it.

Is it not remarkable, then, that the development of this most important faculty — the brain-ear — has usually been left to hap-hazard? It should and must receive the first attention, and, indeed, it cannot receive too much or too constant care.

* *

*

Let us assume, then, that the child has learned to take pleasure in the singing of songs and that he has accumulated a goodly repertory representative of such thoughts and feelings as his pleasures, games and nature environment may engender. The time has now come to build upon this foundation, or rather to utilize the unconscious musical qualities already obtained in the singing of songs, in shaping the elementary facts of musical consciousness upon which the whole structure of music rests.

* *

*

As this is not a treatise on methods of instruction, but on the general principles of musical education, the application of these

Application
of musical
conscious-
ness en-
gendered
by songs

Conscious
recognition
of tone-
relations

principles will be left to the teacher's individual preference.

Our next step, therefore, the development of the mind to a conscious recognition of tone-relationship, may be led up to in many ways. The usual way is to start with the major scale and, by bringing its steps into conscious relation to its keynote and to each other, to obtain a knowledge of all the diatonic intervals. Another way is to utilize song-material already familiar to the child, and to select from it the various intervals to be consciously apprehended. Some teachers consider it desirable to develop a sense of absolute pitch from the very beginning. But, whatever the method, the main thing must be to train the ear to a recognition of definite tone-relationships *by means of its own experience*. If this important work is properly done, the child should soon be able to recognize the major and minor seconds, thirds and sixths, the perfect fifths and octaves, and the augmented fourths and diminished fifths in association with their resolutions. The few remaining diatonic intervals will offer no difficulty.

* *

*

Application
of correct
principles

The age and mental advancement of the pupil must determine whether these musical

conceptions, called intervals, shall be named as such, or whether they shall be treated simply as combinations of the different steps of the scale. For instance, a very young child will be able to sing *one-three* of the scale, while he might fail to associate the term *major third* with this tone combination. A pupil a little older would, after singing this interval until he is familiar with its sound-effect, have no difficulty in remembering its name as *major third*, and would sing the interval when called for by its name. The important point is, that the teacher should give names only to those musical conceptions with which the pupil is familiar through his own active experience.

in develop-
ment of
knowledge
of tone-
relations

If the teacher were to play a *major third* and say to the pupil: "This is called a *major third*," the pupil would of course accept the statement, but would probably forget quickly the sound-effect associated with the name. But if the pupil has frequently sung *one-three* of the scale, has recognized it as *one-three* when the teacher sang or played it and has thereby become thoroughly familiar with it as a concrete tone-conception, he will always recall this tone-combination when the teacher names it as *major third*. In other words, the pupil has learned a musical fact by *doing*; he has derived a new fact from an old one; he has proceeded from the known to the unknown; he

has himself discovered a new fact, and all that remains for the teacher to do is to name this new fact John Smith, General Grant, Susan Jones or *major third*—whatever the name, it will be associated in the child's mind with the musical conception to which the teacher applied it.

Therefore, our rule must be: *Do the thing, then name it.*

This rule must be applied henceforth with rigid consistency, for only in this way can the teacher make sure that every musical term will be associated with a clear and correct conception of the thing which it represents.

* *

*

**Interval
practice**

The practice in the singing and recognition of intervals either as such or as steps of the scale should be carried on daily for a longer or shorter period, according to the age of the pupil and his power of physical endurance and mental concentration. As a rule, frequent short periods of practice will be more productive than long periods at greater intervals. The teacher must judge also whether the pupil is old enough to do this practice as a task or as a form of childish diversion. If the former, it should be so conducted as to make the task pleasant through the pupil's real interest and desire to learn. The interval-practice

Preliminary Development of Faculties

may be followed by chord-practice at an early stage, as it offers no greater difficulties in apprehension. The pupil who can recognize *one-three-five* of the scale, or a *major third* and *perfect fifth*, will have no trouble in recognizing and naming it a *major triad* whenever the teacher has decided to associate that name with this particular tone-combination.

* *

*

And so, gradually, all diatonic tone-combinations, and also some chromatic ones, will become known to the pupil by *doing*, and he will associate them with their appropriate names. Simultaneously with this work in pitch-relation, however, there must progress an appreciation of that other great element of musical expression — rhythm.

Feeling of
rhythm

The lack of rhythmic sense is probably that element in the majority of music-students which gives most frequent cause for complaint. The reason for this condition is usually to be found in the inadequate and incorrect way in which this feature of musical expression has been taught in the early stages of music-study. The process is generally like this: The teacher shows the pupil a whole note and tells him that, whenever he sees a whole note, he must count four; then a half-note, count two; a quarter-note, count one; eighth-notes, play

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

two to each count; sixteenth-notes, *four*; and so on. As a result, when the playing is easy, the pupil will count quickly, when it is difficult, slowly; consequently, no true rhythmic feeling will be developed. This method of teaching violates the rule which is derived from our main principles: *Teach ideas before words; the thing before the symbol.*

Before we talk about "time," "metre" or "rhythm" we must develop the feeling of rhythm and apply this to musical expression. So taught, rhythm will not be associated with symbols, but with rhythmic action, through which the rhythmic sense becomes part of the pupil's organism. Every child loves to march and to dance. This is the best aid to the teacher in developing rhythm. Play a march and let the pupil march, accentuating the step on the left foot. The tempo of the march should be changed from time to time; but not within the same lesson, so as not to confuse the pupil. A little song in march-rhythm may then be learned and sung, while marching, with proper emphasis on the first beat of each measure. Similarly, a Polonaise — a stately march in triple time — may be executed; then a Waltz, Polka, etc. It is unnecessary at this stage to talk about metre or rhythm. The important thing is, that the child learns to *feel* rhythm, to recognize the

inexorability of the *regular recurrence of the accented sounds*. Any laxness in this respect must be immediately corrected, and the exercises, both physical and musical, continued until the teacher is assured that the child can no more deviate from true rhythmic feeling than can the pendulum of a clock.

* *

*

It should be reiterated here that our present consideration is not the teaching of music in in any one of its different forms, but simply the development of those faculties which are necessary to the apprehension and expression of music. We are opening the door through which music enters and passes out. Without an intelligent musical ear and rhythmic sense as part of the trained ear there can be no real musical intelligence.

Summary
of the
chapter

The time devoted to this preparation should not be begrudged, even though the actual teaching on the piano or violin be delayed for a year or even two years. The progress, both in quality and quantity, will be greater and more rapid if this preparation has been thorough. Would that parents were more prone to recognize this, instead of insisting upon demonstrations of "progress" by mechanically acquired repertoires.

CHAPTER II

THE TRAINING OF THE MIND-EAR.

Comparison of the trained ear with the untrained

Before proceeding to the work of building upon the foundation provided by the above-mentioned preliminary development, let us make clear to ourselves the processes of physical and intellectual action and reaction entering into the apprehension and expression of music.

A musical illustration will perhaps best serve our purpose. Let us listen to the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in C \sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2. The untrained ear will come under the spell of this music, and there will be a certain emotional response during its continuance, but it will be vague and evanescent because there are no intellectual milestones and finger-posts to guide the listener. He travels the road and enjoys its scenery for the time being, but knows not whence it starts, whither it goes, or where and how it turns. Beyond the recollection that it was pleasant he cannot recall its features or bring back those characteristics which most impressed him at the time. The untrained ear communicated the sensual impressions directly to the emotions without passing them through the analytical, critical

and recording processes of the mind. The trained ear, on the contrary, will recognize every feature of the music as a concrete, recognizable and definable phenomenon. It will establish its melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements, its tempo, its spiritual characteristics and its relation to the listener's own soul-experience, which is, of course, the measure of comprehension which any one can bring to the appreciation of a work of art or any other form of spiritual expression. The intellectual grasp thus gained, the trained ear will be able to facilitate self-expression through the medium of the same composition, so that it will not only convey to other intelligent listeners the message of the composer, but will do so with the added force of conviction which sincere individual expression gives.

* *

*

For the purpose of this discussion let us call the untrained ear the *passive* ear, the trained, the *active*. The former receives, enjoys the pleasing sensations induced by the tone-successions and combinations, and reacts subconsciously in emotional reflexes. The latter, however, acts instantaneously, constantly and in various directions, and it is important that the teacher should know the physical and in-

The active
and the
passive
ear

tellectual processes in which the brain-ear, the *active* ear, is the centre of activity. It would lead too far to introduce an explanation of the acoustic properties of sound and of the anatomical structure of the ear. These matters can and should be studied by the musician in the comprehensive literature which treats thereof. We are concerned principally with the activities of the mind on receiving the impressions of musical sounds from the ear, and in directing the expression of musical thoughts through some tone-medium.


* *

*

Processes
of music
apprehen-
sion

Let us suppose that we hear one isolated musical sound, the tone of a bell, the whistle of a steamboat, the note of a bird or a human voice, uttering one single tone. This impression is transmitted by the proper nerve to the brain, and there it calls for analytical and critical observation. The intellect recognizes its nature as a bell-tone, whistle, bird-note, or human utterance, and may define its pitch, duration and quality; but so long as this tone is unrelated to other tones there will be no musical thought or meaning conveyed by it. The hearing of two tones in succession or simultaneously may suggest the germ of a musical thought, but is insufficient in itself to

The Training of the Mind-Ear

convey an intelligent message. It is only when a series of musical sounds is grouped in rhythmical units and these groups are brought into intelligent harmonic relation to each other, that we are able to recognize an intelligible musical thought. The mind will classify two tones as such and such an interval, but there interest ends, for this interval, unrelated to further musical values, suggests no complete musical thought. To illustrate: 

is a descending *minor third* and suggests the note of the cuckoo. But let us bring this interval into relation with other tones in rhythmic grouping and it immediately acquires musical value through intellectual association. For example:



It is not necessary to supply the words in order to recognize that it is a complete musical thought expressed metrically, similarly to poetic verse. In the latter form it might look like this:

Cuckoo, cuckoo calls from the tree.
Cheerfully singing,
Summer he's bringing;
Cuckoo, cuckoo, welcome to me.

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

To the musical ear the characteristics of metre, melodic progression and harmonic cadential relations proclaim it as a complete, intelligible musical thought. The mind recognizes, analyzes, compares and registers this group of musical sounds and stores it up ready for use in case the mind should direct its utterance by the organs of expression.

The mental processes involved in the apprehension of the above simple tune apply to the apprehension of all musical works, large or small, for the elements of melody, rhythm and harmony are common to them all.

* *

*

Processes of musical expression

This function of the mind, the apprehension of music, may seem complex, but it is really simple in comparison with the mental activity involved in intelligent musical self-expression. Here again the mind-ear is the general superintendent of activities.

The emotions seek expression and the mind devises its form and means, which latter we will assume to be the voice. The mind conceives a certain tune and wills that the voice shall commence on a tone of a certain pitch, quality, intensity, duration and stress. To produce this particular kind of tone the whole vocal apparatus, the lungs, the muscles sur-

The Training of the Mind-Ear

rounding them, the vocal cords, tongue, palate and maxillary muscles, the nerves governing their action, etc., etc., must be set in motion instantly and harmoniously and with such accuracy that the exact tone-effect conceived and willed by the mind is produced. It is the mind-ear, previously trained to its functions, which alone makes this marvelous action and reaction, this coöperation and reciprocal support, possible. It performs most of its functions subconsciously; indeed, the number and complexity of the processes required in producing a single musical tone are so great that conscious control of each activity would take too much time and would be futile because all must take place simultaneously. To secure the highest development of the directive powers of the mind-ear and the quickest and most accurate response to its demands upon the medium of expression is one of the principal tasks of the teacher.

* *

*

To illustrate the nature of the directive work which the mind-ear is called on to perform, let us assume that the brain is a room in which the mind-ear is seated before a large telephone switchboard. He receives from his superior officer in the intellectual-spiritual department

**Directive
work of
the mind-
ear**

orders to connect the vocal apparatus with the centre of thought and emotion and to stand by to control the machinery. As the higher power wills each tone, the mind-ear flashes commands to every part of the vocal apparatus, which responds instantly, provided each part of the machine has been perfectly fitted for its share of the task. It is this fitting process which we call *study*. The mind-ear finds that the vocal cords failed to produce the exact pitch — therefore it exacts repetition of the process until the pitch is true. The tone is not evenly sustained, hence the bellows are in need of attention; the vowels are impure and the enunciation indistinct, hence there is much to remedy in the organs of speech. All this the mind-ear must control, must have ready for immediate use. Would it not seem evident, therefore, that, before we can train the apparatus, we must train the man that runs it? For it is most important to remember that your machine cannot do my work, nor can my machine do yours. Each machine is so constructed that it can do only the owner's work; hence it is only the owner himself who can gradually adjust it, adapt it, polish it until it does the work the owner exacts of it. As this is possible only through his assistant, the mind-ear, the importance of giving this personage the best education

conceivable and obtainable will readily be granted.

* *
*

He must first of all hear as much as possible all that is beautiful in sound. He should learn to distinguish between the myriad sounds in nature. His first acquaintance with human music should be a mother's sweet lullaby. The songs of the nursery should ever be gentle and in association with words that stimulate thoughts of beautiful ideas. As he grows older, his power of discrimination should be encouraged, the preference for the beautiful, the rejection of the inadequate or the vulgar.

Training
of the
mind-ear

Remember, we are speaking of the mind-ear — not the owner. He, poor fellow, gets a general education, hard knocks and poor fare; the ugly with the beautiful; the contact with evil as well as good. But the mind-ear must be a specialist, and it is therefore necessary that his powers of discrimination, his knowledge of all elements in the domain of sound, be of the highest order.

In some people the mind-ear is naturally keen and competent; in others it must and can be trained. We need only look back on our own development to realize how our powers of discrimination, our musical judg-

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

ment and taste, have developed and improved through experience, study and opportunities for comparison.

* *

*

**Necessity
of highest
develop-
ment of
mind-ear**

Unless the mind-ear is developed from the first, musical practice, except under constant supervision by the teacher, would be impossible. For practice may not be mechanical. It must be made to conform to higher standards of expression, and that needs constant criticism and control, which must come from the pupil in order that musical thought and expression may become simultaneous functions, in which case they are true self-expression.

Therefore, once again, the highest culture of the ear—the physical and the mental ear—is the *alpha* and the *omega* of music-study, and all processes of music-expression are subordinate to it and under its direct control.

* *

*

**Technical
training**

Having established the important functions which the mind-ear exercises in the apprehension and expression of music, and discussed the ways and means calculated to develop this faculty, we must now devote ourselves to the shaping and training of the tools employed

The Training of the Mind-Ear

in music-expression. Here again we are not to discuss methods of application, but fundamental principles.

In approaching this subject it will be well to recognize that the physical elements of music-expression, the voice, fingers, etc., must not be looked upon as a purely mechanical apparatus. Efforts to train the hand and fingers mechanically by the use of dumb clavier have always proved unsatisfactory. The separation of so-called technical training from the musical purposes to which it is ultimately to be applied may lead to mechanical skill, but not to musical results. At the outset, therefore, let us recall our previous statement that the channels or processes of music-expression are threefold, namely:

Psychic — emotional.

Mental — intellectual.

Physical — voice, fingers, etc.

These three processes are introactive. They are not consecutive, as might appear to be the case at first sight: that a feeling seeks expression, that the mind then devises its form and manner, and the fingers finally do the actual work according to pattern. The proof of this is obvious in listening to two singers or two instrumentalists of equal technical and mental ability, one of whom conveys to the listener a

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

deep feeling and meaning, while the other, with equal beauty of phrasing, fails to move us. In the former, the connection between emotion and means of expression is direct, having become so by habitual introactive use. The latter has only shaped the garment, and the emotion cannot get into it because it will fit only when fashioned upon its own body.

* *

*

**Relation of
physical to
mental and
spiritual
processes**

The physical, mental and psychic processes must therefore always progress hand in hand. Besides the advantage of securing thereby a perfect medium of expression, we also avoid the error, all too common, of developing the fingers far beyond the ability of the mind and heart to grasp the inner meaning of the things they utter; or of attempting to sing Wagnerian rôles which stir our emotions before we have learned to sing correctly.

The effort of the teacher must be to develop all three processes evenly and to see to it that they properly react upon each other.

* *

*

Technique

We will now discuss the development of the physical processes, usually termed *technique*.

The Training of the Mind-Ear

These processes depend upon the use of the nerves, muscles, bones, cartilages, sinews, tendons, joints, membranes, etc., which make up the apparatus of the vocalist or instrumentalist. This machinery of levers and other mechanical devices is set in motion through the medium of the nervous system in obedience to the will. Most of the processes are carried out subconsciously and, where originally done consciously, they often develop into reflex actions by dint of frequent repetition.

The teacher's problem is to shape this material, varied and complex in its composition, into a perfect tool of expression capable of uttering feelings so deep that speech cannot express them, and of arousing similar feelings in the breast of the listener.

* *

*

We shall take it for granted that the pupil has had some musical experience and ear-training through singing and hearing songs, and is ready to travel farther on the road of the study of music. We must now recall one of the fundamental principles enunciated above.

**Application
of musical
experience
to first
steps in
technical
training**

Lead the child to discover for himself. The child should do the work, the teacher lead.

If the instrument is the piano, the first thing the pupil must learn is the arrangement

of the keys of the instrument and the tones they produce when struck. The usual way in which this is done is to point to Middle *C* and say: "This key is called *C*, and this one just above it is *D*," and so on. Then the pupil is told to strike *C*, *D*, etc., and, as a result, instead of associating the letter-names with sounds, he associates them with keys. The better way is to let the child discover for himself. Let him sing one of his simple songs, such as "Three blind mice," or "My country, 'tis of thee," in the key of *C*, and then let him pick out the tones on the piano. In this way the key will always be associated in his mind with a sound, not with a name or a note, except as these are representative of a tone.

* *

*

**Teaching
notation**

Simultaneously with this exercise of finding his songs on the piano, it will be well to teach the notes. Again, we must not draw a staff and say: "This is a staff"; and then make notes and name them; but we must let the pupil sing a scale — *C* or *D* or any other tone on some neutral syllable such as *la* or *loo*, then with the letter-names *C*, *D*, *E*, etc. Then dictate: "Sing *C*, sing *D*," the pupil producing the tone called for by its name. When this association of tone with name is thoroughly es-

tablished, draw a staff (do not yet discuss its name or properties) and say: "Sing C." When the pupil has sung it, place the note on the staff and say: "This is the picture of the tone you have sung."—This method is continued throughout the scale and followed by dictation-exercises in which the teacher points to notes, or writes notes, letting the pupil sing them. The process is continued by going to the piano, when the teacher writes a note, the pupil sings it, and then finds and plays the key, thereby associating the key with its note through association with the tone. This would be the logical exposition of the rules: *Teach the thing before the symbol; do the thing, then name it, then represent it*; both of which are derived from the general principle: *Let the child discover for himself*, that is, let him make thorough acquaintance through his sense-experience with the thing to be learned; then we may name it and represent it, and the name or symbol will always recall the real essence of the thing.

* *

*

The pupil is now ready to begin piano-lessons. What does that mean? Is he now to do systematic finger- and wrist-gymnastics in order to develop the so-called piano-technique? Is he to practice dry five-finger exer-

**Beginning
to play the
piano**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

cises, each exercise to be played twenty times in each practice-hour? Is he to be taught to hate music fervently and to wish that lightning might destroy the piano?

Or is he to play little commonplace tunes or simplified operatic arrangements, all of which the teacher has drilled into him mechanically with many thumpings on the floor to make the pupil "keep time," and innumerable corrections of wrong notes recurring always in the same place?

No, he is to do none of these things. He is to learn from the beginning to use the piano as a means of self-expression. It is the most important moment of his musical development, and everything depends upon the teacher's skill in turning the pupil's face in the right direction.

* *

*

First steps

Suppose that the pupil is required to discover the following tune on the piano:

Oh how love-ly is the eve-ning, is the eve-ning, When the bells are
sweet-ly ring-ing, sweet-ly ring-ing, Ding, dong, ding, dong, ding, dong.

He has sung it many times, alone, or with others as a Round. His imagination pictures

the sound of the church-bells throbbing through the evening air. He will soon find the keys, and after some effort he will, under the guidance of the teacher, group the tones in correct rhythm in accordance with the well-known song. If the teacher stops at this stage and declares his satisfaction with the correctness of tones and time, great damage will result, for the pupil draws the inference that he needs only push down the right keys and do it in the right time in order to satisfy the teacher's requirements and "to play the piano."

On the contrary, now begins the most important part of the lesson. The teacher must lead the pupil to come as close as possible to the song. The *legato* playing, the emphasis of the important tones, the proper detachment of the phrases from each other, just as they are detached by breathing in the song, the spirit of tranquillity in the swing of the metre and the onomatopoetic *ding, dong* of the bell—all these must be *discovered* by the pupil in the song and rendered as closely as possible on the piano. The teacher must always hold before him the imaginative, poetic and æsthetic features of the melody and must stimulate the pupil to express them. Comparison, contrast and antithesis are valuable means to demonstrate to him his failures and the road to success. But be it ever remembered: *Let*

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

the pupil discover for himself, the teacher lead!
The pupil's interpretation of the song may be crude, but it will be his own and, if he has been correctly guided, it will be along the right musical and æsthetic lines.

* *
*

The song
as bridge
to first
attempts
to play

It is obvious that a song should form the bridge to the piano, for we must proceed from the known to the unknown, and the pupil's knowledge of music is hitherto solely comprised in the song. Moreover, it will be advantageous to continue to translate songs to the keyboard, for in this way the pupil will gradually find ways and means to express a large variety of sensations, fancies and emotions, thereby gaining valuable experience in self-expression. The time will come before long when a tune without words will convey its emotional message with unfailing accuracy, but this condition can be developed only from an association with concrete poetic ideas expressed in words from which abstract emotional sensations are derived and expressed purely in tones.

* *
*

Natural
adaptation
of physical

"Meanwhile," asks the teacher, "what becomes of the hands and fingers?" There is no

cause for worry. Create in the pupil a clear conception of what he wants to express, and arouse his will to express it, and nature will find ways and means—nay, the best ways and means—to express it. It will shape the tools of expression with a refinement of accuracy which no mechanical means can hope to secure. The chief duty of the teacher is to see that the muscles are relaxed in order that they may be ready to do whatever work the will, acting through the mind-ear, may exact of them. From time to time, hints as to the advantage of dropping the wrist below the knuckles, or of carrying the thumb under the fingers in running up or down the scale, or of other manipulations, may be given, but they should be given only as applicable to some particular case in point, not as general practices.

apparatus
to the
musical
task

* *
*

It will be found advantageous to use the left hand, alternating with the right, when first beginning to render songs on the piano. This will not only tend to develop the left hand evenly with the right, but it will prevent the incorrect conception that the left hand is less important than the right. There is also no reason why, when the notes are introduced in the treble clef and played by the right hand,

Simultane-
ous devel-
opment of
left and
right
hands

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

the notes in the bass clef should not be taught simultaneously and played by the left hand. But this must be done strictly in the same order as before, i. e., tone, name, symbol, key.

* *

*

**Real piano
music**

As soon as the pupil has gained sufficient acquaintance with the notes and the keyboard through the playing of songs and of simple tunes, real piano music, that is, music written for this instrument and not associated with any song or necessarily descriptive of any definite poetic thought, should be introduced. It may be helpful, and serve as a bridge, to choose at first such little pieces as contain some definite appeal to the imagination, such as Schumann uses in his titles in the *Album for the Young* and *Scenes from Childhood*. But gradually these programmatic crutches should be dropped and, if the child's imagination and poetic sense have been rightly developed, he will recognize, respond to and express the emotional contents of a piece of music without a title or a programme.

* *

*

**Function
of music
is to ex-
press itself**

It may be well at this point to state, as a principle which cannot be too strongly upheld, that the highest function and purpose of

music is to express itself. In all the other arts expression is sought through analogies with other mental and physical phenomena. Painting, sculpture and architecture borrow their medium of expression from nature; poetry and the drama appeal to the emotion and the mind through the recital or portrayal of definite phases of human thought and emotions. They are, so to speak, mirrors of life. Music, however, is not bound to or limited by any natural object, human thought or specific feeling. If it is to be so limited, it must be so labeled or brought into definite relation with the specific thought or feeling. To illustrate: Imagine listening to the *Introduction* to the Third Act of "Die Meistersinger" without knowing whence it is taken and without any acquaintance with either the text or the music of this opera. It will not arouse the thoughts associated with the situations, characters or emotions of the drama, but it will convey its message to you as music pure and simple, causing certain strings of your soul to vibrate in tune with it. The listener to whom the opera is familiar will, as he listens to this introduction, imagine *Hans Sachs* in deep meditation over the events of the past day—the advent and trial of the young knight by the *Mastersingers*, the love of *Walther* and *Eva*, her coquettish suggestion of his own eligibility

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

and his own realization of his age. Then the soft intoning of his great hymn, "*Awake!*" foreshadowing his apotheosis — all of these thoughts may be called forth by this music; but without these poetic associations the music is just as beautiful, its emotional power just as great — nay, I would say greater, because less limited.

Is the *Andante* of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony less impressive because it has no title or text? Is the message in the *Finale* of Brahms' First Symphony unintelligible because it is not labelled "Heldenleben"?

No, music uses and needs no other medium than itself. It does not try to express love, hate, joy, sorrow, or any other human emotion as such; but it may arouse such feelings under conditions favorable to their development, such as individual conditions of mind and soul of the listener; poetic or dramatic association. Take the music of any love-song, dissociate it from the text and from preconceived association with the expression of love, and you cannot say that this succession of musical notes spells "I love you." If you are eighteen it may do so, but so would the music of the song entitled "*'Way down upon the Suwanee Ribber,*" or "*Flow gently, sweet Afton.*" If you are fifty-eight, love-songs are scarcer and not so quickly recognized as such,

The Training of the Mind-Ear

but the true love-song will then have gained immensely in depth of meaning, especially if the words are left out.

* *

*

Returning now to the process of development in playing the piano, let us see how we logically apply the fundamental principles of good teaching.

Application
of funda-
mental
principles
to study
of piano

Again, the first step will be to arouse the pupil's interest; therefore, the teacher should play the piece as a whole exactly as it should sound. This is not done for imitation on the part of the pupil, but in order to kindle his interest, to give him a general impression of the character of the music and to set for him a goal toward which to strive. He will not remember the details of melody, harmony and phrasing, so that there will be no danger of loss of initiative in discovering these for himself. All elementary conceptions recognize complete objects more readily than incomplete ones, even though the complete be more complex. The reason for this lies in the fact that the complete object expresses itself and explains itself by means of its functions. For instance, a child will readily recognize a wagon as such when he plays with his little express cart, pulling it along by the pole,

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

watching its wheels turn and putting sand or sister's doll into the box. But if we were to give the child the wheels, then the bottom of the box, then the sides and then the pole and try to explain to him what the wagon would be if these parts were all put together, his conception of a wagon would probably be a queer one. We therefore follow in elementary teaching the rule: *Present the whole before its parts.*

So presented, these parts will become intelligible to the child-mind through their relation to the whole; while, dissociated from this relation, they are meaningless.

* *

*

Effort
at self-
expression

The next step will be the pupil's own effort to express himself through this piece. He has some knowledge of the notes and some acquaintance with the keys of the piano; how shall he apply this knowledge? Shall he read the first note and then touch the key which corresponds to it, then the next note and key and so on? No, indeed. That would be purely mechanical and would tend to destroy the musical interest just aroused by the teacher's playing. It would be the playing of a succession of detached tones having no musical significance and being in no recog-

nizable relation to the piece as a whole. The better way would be to let the pupil sing the first phrase of the melody and play it as connectedly as possible. This phrase should be repeated as often as may be necessary to secure accuracy, proper rhythmic grouping, emphasis and phrasing. Then the accompanying hand should join — preferably without first playing alone. This will usually be possible, because the melody-hand will require little attention after it has gained the “feel” of its tune by repetition.

In this manner phrase will be added to phrase until the whole piece is finished. As the musical quality of each phrase will have been maintained, there will have resulted no loss of interest in the analytic process of becoming familiar with the parts, and the piece as a whole will come appreciably closer to a correct interpretation.



This process of teaching the reading from notes corresponds to modern ways of teaching reading from books. Formerly, children were taught to read each letter and then these were put together to form the word. To-day they are taught to recognize the word as a whole, this whole representing some object

Reading
from notes
as com-
pared
with read-
ing from
books

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

or mental conception; then, and not till then, is it broken up into its component parts, the letters.

Hearing
musical
phrases in
reading
them

Another important object is gained by this process. The child, in reading each phrase, becomes more and more expert in *hearing* the tones represented by the notes before playing them. Consequently, the moment a key is struck which does not correspond to the sound expected by the mind-ear, it will be detected as an error and corrected. Furthermore, this reading of the phrases with the mind-ear develops greater speed and accuracy in sight-playing, a most important accomplishment which is unfortunately rare among music-students.

* * *

Adaptation
of tech-
nique to
musical
require-
ments

In the course of working out the playing of each phrase, certain so-called technical difficulties will develop, such as the even, rapid playing of a portion of a scale, the smooth playing of a broken chord, or the accurate execution of a rhythmic figure with dotted notes. In all cases the pupil's mind should be kept concentrated on the musical quality and significance of this detail, and he should be

made to strive toward its realization. A hint from the teacher from time to time as to how best to use the fingers should suffice. The actual doing of the phrase, repeated always with the object of expressing its musical significance, will develop naturally (and therefore correctly) the tools of expression.

It is not to be inferred that the practice of finger-exercises, scales and arpeggios is wrong. On the contrary, they are absolutely necessary at the proper time and in the proper way, but not at this stage. At present we are concerned in developing just as much technical ability as is needed for the expression of music suited to the child's age and mentality; and we are also engaged in forming correct musical conceptions, among which should be the important one that technique is to serve music, not that music is the vehicle of technique. We should, therefore, provide at this stage only such exercises as are immediately applicable and necessary to the proper execution of the musical material under study. These exercises should be repeated solely with the view of approaching nearer to the musical purpose of the phrase in which they occur. Hence, it is important that attention should be given, not to the *number* of repetitions, but to the *quality*. Each repetition should come nearer to the ideal set by the pupil's musical conception.

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

Definition of tech- nique

We have been using the word *technique* frequently, and it may be desirable to define its meaning and function clearly before we discuss the larger problems in which it forms an important factor.

Primarily, *technique* denotes the skill in applying the physical equipment required in art-expression. When we speak of piano-technique, violin-technique, etc., we mean the special skill required for musical expression in a way characteristic of each instrument. We have already noted that, although the physical means of music-expression are mechanical, their application is directed by the feelings and the intellect; hence, we must not study *technique* as a thing apart, but always in association with a musical motive and purpose.

The study of *technique* therefore involves not only the training of nerves, muscles, etc., but also of certain intellectual functions, such as the power of concentration, the formation of correct habits of thought, the development of critical judgment and the formation and schooling of the memory. /

* *

*

Adaptation of tech- nique to pupil's ca-

Remembering our previous conclusion, that the fingers should not be required to execute what the mind and heart do not understand,

The Training of the Mind-Ear

the teacher should begin by finding out the pupil's capacity for feeling and thought and adapt the *technique* to this standard. With greater mental maturity and power, and with greater scope and depth of his emotional life, the demands on his powers of expression will also grow; consequently, his *technique* or skill in expression will require extension.

capacity of
thought
and feel-
ing

* *

*

The first requisite, therefore, is to discover exactly where the student stands, not only at the beginning, but constantly. Moreover, the music-teacher will not rest satisfied with the mental and emotional capacity of the pupil as he finds it, but will endeavor to round out incomplete, and correct imperfect or wrong, conceptions. He will stimulate his imagination by stories, poems, etc.; select books which will interest him and at the same time help to form his character; finally, he will arouse his interest in all forms of the beautiful in nature and art, in nobility of character and in ideal conceptions.

Develop-
ment of
pupil's
mental and
emotional
capacity

* *

*

All this can and should be accomplished as a concomitant part of the teaching of *technique*. The pupil will gladly accompany the teacher

Develop-
ment of
pupil from
within

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

into these higher realms, provided the teacher remains ever at his side. The secret of success lies in the teacher's ability to descend to the pupil's level and thence to lead him upward. No matter how wise the teacher may be, he cannot pour his wisdom into the pupil's mind so that it will truly serve him. Each one's wisdom must be self-developed from within his own consciousness in order that it shall be a part of him.

The teacher must put himself in the pupil's place, realize his viewpoint and capacity for thought and feeling and, guided by his own knowledge and experience, show him how to discover the next higher step in the ladder of advancement.

* *

*

Concen- tration

One of the first requisites in the study of anything is the power of concentration. This power can be applied for only brief periods in young children, but it can be developed to a high degree. Its root is interest. As long as the child is interested, he will concentrate himself upon any occupation. When he tires, interest ceases, and it is then advisable to change the occupation, returning to the former one when he tires of this in turn. As the mind matures, this power of concentration becomes

The Training of the Mind-Ear

more and more controllable by the will, and it will then be necessary to develop and train the *will to concentrate*. No one method of doing this can be designed, as each pupil must be reached through his own channels of willing coöperation.

* *

*

The development of critical judgment is largely accomplished through the formation of good taste by means of contact and intellectual experience with the beautiful, true and good, and by comparison. Here again the skill, ingenuity and knowledge of the teacher must select and adapt the best ways and means to secure results. Great care should be taken that the pupil's judgment is really his own, not that of his teacher. He cannot be expected to see farther or clearer than the limit of illumination which his intellectual candle creates and permits. Were he to try to see all that the teacher's electric searchlight shows, he would become hopelessly confused with the multitude and complexity of impressions which his mind is as yet unable to grasp, coördinate and apply, and which would, therefore, blur and distort his critical judgment.

**Critical
judgment**

Memory

The formation and schooling of the memory is one of the most important, and also one of the most interesting, of tasks. Its purpose is to make the vehicle of musical expression, the song, or the composition for piano, violin or other instrument so much part of one's self that, instead of dividing one's attention in the reading of notes, technical details, etc., our whole interest may be concentrated on interpretation and self-expression.

The usual procedure in memorizing is to "play the phrase or piece over and over until you know it." Memory cultivated by this process, however, is a very unreliable staff to lean on. If anything occurs to stop the player, he will find it impossible to start again where he left off, or at any other point; he will have to return to the beginning or, at best, to a major subdivision. The reason for this lies in the fact that this kind of memory is purely mechanical, depending upon subconscious reflex action of the physical apparatus of expression. This mechanical memory must be cultivated, for it has to do an important share of the work; but it should not be exclusively depended upon. The most reliable props of the memory are those formed of associations with related conceptions of the senses, mind or emotions. In other words, *mnemonics* are best established by linking mental, sensual

The Training of the Mind-Ear

and emotional impressions in such manner that each link touches, i. e., suggests, the next. That the mind-ear must play an important part in this process will appear self-evident, for by the quick and certain recognition of melodic and harmonic progressions, rhythmic configuration, form-characteristics and emotional qualities, the concrete mental picture will be registered and preserved in the brain, ready to be reproduced at will.

* *

*

Repetition is a necessary exercise for the purpose of deepening the brain-impressions and also for securing the rapid, subconscious response of the physical apparatus referred to above, but this must act in harmony with and under the direction of the mental faculties — not by itself, in purely mechanical fashion.

Repetition

* *

*

Unless this training of the memory is begun at a very early stage in the study of music, it will be very difficult to accomplish. In the formation of mental habits it is important that the first exercises should be of the simplest kind and that they should be frequently done, but in ever-varying form. In other words, the mind must be kept active and alert to

**Early
training of
memory**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

recognize minute differences in the musical phrases to be memorized, and to make these differences an aid in remembering phrases of otherwise similar characteristics.

* *

*

**Musical
dictation
an aid to
memory**

A very helpful exercise as an aid of memorizing is to write down from hearing a musical phrase sung or played — that is, from musical dictation. The actual effort to express the musical tones by symbols tends to impress the mind more deeply than simply hearing or playing can do; and when all three means are employed, the impression is usually a lasting one.

* *

*

**Natural
and ac-
quired
musical
memory**

There are some people so endowed by nature that they can remember musical impressions very clearly without much previous musical preparation. This phenomenon must be classified with those which we call talents. It would be a mistake, however, to argue that such talents need no development, or that people who have not such a talent cannot acquire a musical memory. The former's natural gift is usually limited to the simplest commonplaces of musical expression, and should be extended to include everything which they are capable

The Training of the Mind-Ear

of expressing. The latter invariably possess a latent faculty of memory which needs only awakening and development to perform its functions normally.

* *

*

One of the most difficult problems for the teacher to solve is the development in the pupil of correct habits of thought. As a rule, this is left almost entirely to chance, so that even a naturally intelligent pupil fails to bring his work into logical and harmonious relation to its musical purpose. The creation of a habit requires frequent doing of the same thing in the same way. It is therefore important that the mind should be on the alert to see that, once a clear conception of the musical purpose is established, this element of sameness shall be carefully preserved; for if a thing is done in different ways, no habit will result, and the product will vary.

**Correct
habits of
thought**

* *

*

The formation of a habit of thought in guiding the various functions and factors of musical expression demands first of all that the mind shall recognize the ultimate objective clearly and face it unswervingly, no

**Clear con-
ception of
musical
objective**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

matter what subsidiary activities may require its attention. Just as the tight-rope walker selects a distant point straight ahead to enable him to find safe footing on his slender and precarious path, the mind must keep its gaze on the final musical objective, and all other mental, physical and emotional functions must converge toward the same objective. For this reason, the pupil should always be permitted to become acquainted with the musical object of the expression as a whole. Whenever possible, this should be done by letting him hear a good performance of it; but if this is impracticable — especially with advanced students — a reading at sight of the composition as a whole, even if imperfectly rendered, will suggest to him the ideal form it should ultimately take.

* *

*

Recognition
of
content of
musical
thought

The next logical step will be to determine the extent and content of each musical thought, making it the subject of study and practice until it assumes intelligible form and expression. Its study must determine its rhythmic grouping, its points of emphasis, its climax and its transition to and connection with the succeeding thought. Its practice will embrace the adaptation of the organs of expression

The Training of the Mind-Ear

to their task, such as the production of the right quality, quantity and character of tone, the rendition of rapid passages with flexibility, smoothness, brilliancy and proper relation to the context, and the development of the most subtle shades of emotional expression.

In the chapter on "How to Study," the application of these habits of study and practice will be discussed in detail. For the present purpose it will suffice to point out that the central musical objective will guide the analytical, critical and constructive processes of thought in the right direction and that, if they be always carried on in the same logical order, habits of thought will be formed which will insure the recognition of and attention to every detail of musical expression, large and small, the part and the whole.

* *

*

We have now arrived at the point where we may discuss the physical side of *technique* without danger of over-emphasising its importance or of mistaking its proper functions in self-expression.

Physical
processes
in tech-
nique

All the physical processes of musical expression involve the use of muscles. Each process requires the use of certain, definite combinations of muscles acting together coördinately

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

and reciprocally. When this is effected correctly, without interference by other muscles, the result will be satisfactory and will accurately carry out the musical conception to be expressed. Unfortunately, there is an inherent tendency in the human body for sympathetic action of contiguous or related muscles, and this action produces not only unnecessary waste of tissue, but, what is worse, an interference with the action of the proper muscles. Our task, therefore, must be so to train the apparatus of expression that only the necessary muscles perform each process, and that all others remain in a state of rest. It is obvious, consequently, that the first condition for a good physical *technique* is a state of relaxation, so that the muscles may be ready to spring directly into action without first having to release themselves from some previous condition of strain. It is usually quite easy to secure this relaxation in the child, but often extremely difficult in adults, because of nervous conditions, bad habits acquired by faulty use of the muscles, and also carelessness.

* *

*

Independ-
ence of
muscular
action

Such cases will tax the resourcefulness of the teacher severely, but unless they are successfully mastered no satisfactory progress

can be made. One of the most necessary qualities for success in this, as in most other things, is patience on the part of both teacher and pupil, for the wrong habits of years cannot be cured in a day or a week, but will require intelligent daily practice for months. When once general relaxation is secured, it will be less difficult to secure independent action of the muscles needed in any one act of expression. Every one knows the tendency of the little finger (fifth) to move in sympathy with the fourth. This will persist until the muscles of the fifth finger have become strong enough and conscious enough of their own function to "mind their own business." The difficult exercise, therefore, which is usually prescribed to remedy this condition, the slow trill on the fourth and fifth fingers with the other fingers resting on the keys, is not advisable, because in the weak condition of the muscles of both fingers, especially the fifth, they call in the help of other muscles not really needed in the process, and thereby stiffen the hand and wrist.

By dint, then, of using only the necessary set of muscles for a given action, we not only preserve the state of relaxation proper for all other muscles, but we secure independent action — a very important quality. In the study of the piano, this independence of action must be acquired not only between the fingers

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

of each hand, but also between the hands themselves. Easy studies in contrapuntal style best serve this purpose.

* *

*

Strength and en- durance

Other qualities to be developed in the muscles are strength and endurance. These will not be secured by strong and long use, but, on the contrary, by gentle use in short, frequent periods of practice. Nature will not permit forced growth except at a sacrifice of other important qualities. The building up of muscular tissue is a slow process; the slower and steadier, the finer will be the grain and the more capable of producing strength and endurance. Much irreparable harm has been done by teachers who try to develop a "big tone" in little people whose proper scale of expression cannot possibly equal that of the mature artist.

* *

*

Speed and flexibility

The qualities of "speed" and "flexibility" can also be secured only on the basis of slow practice. The running of a clean, smooth scale, whether by the voice or on an instrument, depends primarily not upon speed, but upon the perfect control of the muscles by

The Training of the Mind-Ear

which they are made to produce a tone of the exact quality and strength required to bring it into proper relation to its neighboring tones, or, in the case of gradual *crescendo* or *diminuendo*, with the carefully graduated increase or decrease in strength. Only slow practice, constant, concentrated control and direction of the "mind-ear" will accomplish this.

* *

*

Tone-quality might be designated as that feature which presents the sound in its greatest musical purity. The science of physics teaches us that the irregular vibration of a sound-producing substance produces noise; the more regular the vibrations, the purer the musical sound. The most perfect musical tone is that produced by the most regular vibrations. In developing a good tone in voice or instrument, the ear must be the chief arbiter and guide. By rejecting that which is noisy, harsh, nasal, guttural, and by constant effort toward the tone ideal, the muscles will ultimately find and adopt a habit of action which will satisfy the standards set by the ear. The ear must, therefore, be always on guard at all practice, no matter what other immediate aim be its object, for perfection of musical

**Tone-
quality**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

quality is one of the first requisites. It is not to be supposed, however, that the pure musical tone is the one best adapted to emotional expression. On the contrary, it is by modifications of the pure tone that we secure variety and characteristic qualities. The pure tone should therefore serve chiefly as an æsthetic standard or groundwork capable of such modification as the exigencies of expression may require.

* *
*

Tone- character

Tone-quality must not, therefore, be confused with tone-character, color or variety of touch, bowing or vocal utterance. As to these latter, which embrace the *legato* or slurred tones, the various kinds of *staccato* or detached, the *portamento* or *portato*, etc., etc., the main thing is to give the pupil a clear idea of their true essence and, as with tone-quality, the ear will guide the muscles to produce the exact variety required. This does not preclude such guidance on the part of the teacher as his experience may enable him to apply, but this should not take the place of the pupil's own thorough understanding of the object to be attained and of his own effort toward attaining it.

Tone-character differentiates different voices and instruments from each other. Thus we recognize the peculiar character of the *Soprano* as distinguished from the *Contralto*, *Tenor* and *Bass* voices; the flute, the clarinet, the oboe, the French horn, trumpet and trombone. Each has its definite tone-character with easily recognizable characteristics. Within each of these groups we are also able to distinguish individual tone-character. No two *Soprano* voices are exactly alike, no two violinists, pianists, flutists, oboists, etc. In other words, tone-character forms a large element in self-expression, for the individuality of the performer expresses itself in part through this quality. But in addition to this inherent nature of tone-character, it has another important application, namely, in using tone for the characterization of emotional states, poetic conceptions or in onomatopoetic expression.

Various
phenomena
of tone-
character

Thus, we may characterize on any instrument nobility in declamatory utterance, the conception of heroic deeds, or the buzzing of bees, the rustling of leaves, etc. In this application of tone-character it forms an important part of the musician's equipment and is an essential element in higher interpretation.

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

Tone-color

Tone-color is a term borrowed from a sister art, just as painting has adopted "tone" in its use of colors. While there are those who imagine that they can see red, green, blue, etc., in tones or tonalities, the term is more generally employed in the sense of light, bright, dark or sombre. In this application, tone-color is easily brought into relation with emotional expression, sad moods seeking dark, and joyous moods calling for brighter tone-color. It is a quality which is more easily found in the voice than in instruments, and is therefore not easily attainable by the piano or violin student in the less advanced stages, but there is no harm in recognizing its existence and in permitting the pupil to strive tentatively toward its use.

* *

*

Harmonious action of mind-ear with physical apparatus

As all the foregoing qualities of physical utterance depend upon the adaptation to their ends of the muscular apparatus under guidance and direction of the mind-ear, these two factors in musical expression must work ever in harmony and must grow gradually through their efforts to master each musical problem which presents itself for solution. No one quality should be practiced and developed for its own sake, but only in relation to a musical

The Training of the Mind-Ear

purpose. If this plan is strictly adhered to, there will result not only an even, all-round development of all means of expression, but the pupil's interest will never flag.

CHAPTER III

INTERPRETATION

I. *Musical Form*

Art-forms

Concomitantly with the development of the physical processes of musical expression which we have just discussed must go the recognition of the art-forms and of the musical or poetic contents in which this expression is conveyed. Here again it is desirable to sow the seeds of comprehension at an early age in order that the pupil may recognize it as an integral part of music, not an arbitrary adjunct imposed upon him at a time when his musical studies are already sufficiently complex and arduous. All true interpretation in art depends to a great extent upon a knowledge of art-form and its spiritual contents. The former requires intellectual activity, the latter psychical sensitiveness and quick response to emotional and poetic suggestion.

* *

*

Symmetry

All art expresses itself through the vehicle of form, and this form reveals itself chiefly through the *symmetric* grouping of elements

defining dimension in space or time. Thus, the symmetric arrangement of perpendicular and horizontal lines enables the architect to give artistic form to his building. The symmetric moulding of clay on a beautiful curve produces the vase which is the potter's art-form. The symmetric lines of the human figure gave Phydias his form of expression. The landscape-painter composes his picture on freely symmetric lines. The poet expresses himself through verses of similar length balancing each other with rhymes. The musician, finally, employs phrases of an equal number of rhythmic groups brought into relation to each other by corresponding cadences.

* *
*

But other elements besides symmetry are employed in the creation of art-form. The next in importance is *contrast*. Symmetry is founded on likeness, similarity; contrast, on difference. Thus it is the necessary foil of symmetry, which brings it into stronger relief. To cite a few examples of the manner of employing this element in art: The architect designs a building in which the horizontal lines of two long wings are contrasted with the perpendicular lines of the higher central structure,

Contrast

whose portal perhaps consists of a Doric order to emphasize the contrast between horizontal and perpendicular. Or, he may place a tower in one corner of an otherwise symmetrically built church, which, by its asymmetric position, emphasizes the symmetry of the rest. The poet writes a sonnet, contrasting the two stanzas of four lines each with the two that follow them of only three lines. The musician introduces a contrasting period between the first and third symmetric periods of his primary form; or he contrasts a slow second movement with the two quick first and third movements of his sonata.

* *
*

Repetition

Another important element in form is *repetition*; indeed, in some respects it is the most important, because it is the most elementary evidence of form-sense and feeling. The savage, in decorating his pottery and basket-work, symbolizes some object in nature, such as a flower, a bird or a beast, by a conventionalized figure; and this figure is repeated in symmetrical grouping. In the higher art-forms, also, it is repetition, in various relations of symmetry and contrast, which forms the principal element of artistic expression. This element of repetition is utilized in polyphony in

the form of imitation, the basis of the contrapuntal art-forms.

* *

*

It is not within the proper scope of this small volume to pursue the history, the development, or the study of Musical Form as such. Our present purpose is served by pointing out its chief constituent elements, in order that the intelligent teacher may direct the pupil to their recognition, thereby preparing the way for the future comprehension of art-forms as such, whenever he may be sufficiently mature in mind to understand them. It is scarcely necessary to say that the pupil's knowledge of Form, from the simplest to the most complex, should be derived from the practical examples with which his musical studies have made him familiar.

Study of
musical
form
through
practical
examples

Reciprocally, his knowledge of the elements of Musical Form will enable him to interpret intelligently. He will recognize the *motif*, section, phrase and period as parts of or complete musical thoughts; will place accents and emphasis properly; will bring the parts into correct relation to the whole—in short, he will know whereof he speaks instead of playing aimlessly and mechanically. But all this only if the teacher has gradually made this know-

ledge part of the pupil's musical equipment by associating every reference to Form with his musical experience of the particular feature under consideration.

II. *Musical Content*

The development of a knowledge of Form in musical interpretation should offer but little difficulty to the teacher, as it consists of tangible thought-conceptions based on concrete tone-phenomena. The other side, the musical contents, is far more elusive, because it is not a matter of knowledge, except to a limited degree, but of feeling. Therein lies the danger, for the teacher will always be tempted to urge the pupil to feel as he feels, thereby robbing the latter's musical expression of its best quality, namely, that of *self*, of individuality. And yet he must be guided to a certain extent, chiefly because our children grow up under a too complex system of civilization. They do not really feel, think and act simply and directly, because they imitate and affect the feelings, thoughts and actions of others. They hear the "lady" in the next flat sing a sentimental song with exaggerated sentimentality, and will imitate this performance, ignorant of

the artificiality of its emotional contents and expression.

It must be the teacher's duty to strip the pupil's mind and soul of artificiality, insincerity and affectation. While he may not be able to secure this result in all his relations to life, he should at least bring him to a realization that true art cannot lie, that truth and beauty must go hand in hand in art-expression.

* *
*

The contents of a musical composition may be either purely musical, or associated with some more or less definite poetical conception. In the former case, the music must simply express itself, and it will speak to each listener to the extent, degree and depth of psychical responsiveness of which he is capable. This does not mean that black will appear white or green or yellow to different people, or that a minor cadence will arouse joy in one and sadness in another, but that music, the language of the soul, can be understood only to the extent that the soul has had life-experiences.

**Contents
purely
musical**

The music which expresses the sufferings of a Tristan or an Amfortas cannot be grasped by a child whose severest suffering has been the breaking of the doll's nose.

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

Contents based on poetic con- ceptions

When music is associated with a poetic conception it assumes a more definite and therefore also a more limited meaning. The various forms of so-called programme music belong in this category. For its proper interpretation it is of course essential that the poetic basis should be intellectually grasped and psychically felt. Just as the composer of such a work had to imbue himself with the poetic material in order to give it musical expression, so the interpreter and also the listener must make this poetic material his own in order to respond to its emotional appeal to the fullest extent.

* *

*

Main ele- ments of interpreta- tion

The main elements in the interpretation of a musical work of art, therefore, are: Sincerity of feeling, and sensitiveness to artistic emotional impulses. These qualities represent the psychological element. The next is an intelligent understanding of the musical form and of such poetic or dramatic contents as may be associated with the music. Finally, the ability to execute the composition with technical accuracy in accordance with the composer's purpose and the artist's conception.

* *

*

The teach- er's task

This is "a large contract," and the teacher will meet with many difficulties in trying to

develop these qualities in even a talented pupil. But if he recognizes that, unless he can do so to a reasonable approximation of the ideal, the pupil's work will be mechanical, imitative, insincere and unintelligent, he will either find ways and means to accomplish the desired end, or he will discover that the pupil lacks the ability to develop artistic expression (in which case it were better to devote his time to other useful and interesting studies), or that he, the teacher, has not the gift and power to bring out these qualities in his pupils, proving thereby that he has mistaken his vocation.

For, be it well understood, our point of view in considering principles of pedagogy as applied to music refers to music as an art, not as the making of musical sounds for the purpose of tickling the ear or of wallowing in sentimental mush and mire. The teacher who is satisfied with the latter object can get along with some "method" labelled with some well-known teacher's name, and by putting his pupils through the same methodical process, will no doubt succeed in making them into more or less successful reproductions of that teacher's manners and mannerisms.

* *

*

The teacher who follows a higher ideal, on the contrary, needs no "method." He knows

The mission of the artist

the psychological and pedagogical principles upon which true education from within is based; he knows his pupil and knows the artistic goal toward which he must guide him; and he will devise methods to fit each pupil individually. He believes that *the mission of the artist is to express noble thoughts by noble means to noble minds*; and, that being his creed, he cannot debase his art to serve less worthy purposes.

Great art must spring from noble impulses and must be given expression in a noble form, that is, with sincerity, beauty and spirituality. It must employ as a means of expression a medium capable of conveying thought and feeling in terms of æsthetic utterance. It must make appeal to that which is best and noblest in man.

From this point of view it follows that art must spring from strong, fine character, spirituality and highly developed poetic and æsthetic qualities. If objection to this statement is raised on the score that some great artists' lives showed lamentable weaknesses, we would answer that their best work sprang not from the weak but from the strong elements of their character, and of these their art-work gives ample evidence. True art, conversely, appeals also to what is best in those who come under its influence. It is a mistake, therefore, to

assume that the artist should descend to the supposed level of his audience. By giving his best of the best and noblest, that which is best and noblest in all whom he addresses (and there is something good in every human being) will respond, and he will thereby lift his audience nearer to his level instead of descending to theirs.

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO STUDY

We have discussed hitherto the teacher's aims and means in instructing the student of music; but however excellent this instruction may be, it will avail little unless the pupil complements the teacher's efforts by knowing *how to study*. For the art of musical expression is not a passive but an active one. It is not enough to *know*, but it must *do* the thing to be expressed, and that requires much experience in doing — in short, practice.

Practice! Is there another word so hated, so full of dismal associations? Is there another human occupation at which so much valuable time has been wasted, by which so much harm has been done in wrong effort, and by which so many blooms of promise of higher qualities have been nipped in the bud? And all because this practice has been mechanical, enforced, unintelligent and devoid of musical interest, impulse or purpose. The teacher's duty, therefore, is not only to teach *what* to study, but *how* to study; and his success in this feature of his work will measure that in all else.

The study of music involves every process which enters into its apprehension and expres-

sion. If these processes are brought into systematic order and relation to each other, so that the student is conscious of their individual functions, he will acquire habits of thought and action which will enable him to reach his musical goal by the most direct road and with the greatest economy of effort.

As we have seen before, the first step is the awakening or creating of interest by appealing to the pupil's emotions and his æsthetic sense. This stimulates his desire to learn, and this, in turn, brings forth effort. It is this effort, then, which the teacher must guide, for it is the pupil's own active endeavor to accomplish something to him desirable, which, if undirected or wrongly directed, will discourage him from further effort and may kill his interest in the object, but which, if rightly guided, will engender further effort.

It is therefore essential that, first of all, the pupil shall want to express something in music and that, according to his mental maturity, he shall be conscious of what he desires to express both as to its form and contents. Then comes the gradual development of the skill of expression which, as we have shown in a previous chapter, must be acquired in direct application to the musical object, not as a separate accomplishment. But it may be urged that such a procedure may do well

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

enough for the beginning when the technical demands are simple, whereas with the greater demands for skilful execution more serious work must be done.

All work must be serious, that is, purposeful. It must be so in the beginning and at all stages of study. To arouse interest in work by means of holding up something beautiful as an object of work, is not play, but, on the contrary, leads to purposeful work. But it will do this only if another factor is added to *interest*, namely, *discipline*.

* *

*

Discipline

What is discipline? Is it the arbitrary enforcement of rules of conduct and action? If so applied in teaching, it may produce external, superficial results, but it will not develop the pupil's powers from within—the only way by which he can learn to express himself. No, discipline in music-study must be the development of the critical faculty in the student to such a degree that he will not accept from himself anything that does not conform to the highest standards of musical expression of which he is capable according to his age and natural talent.

This kind of discipline is the only dependable kind, for it ensures intelligent practice

during the teacher's absence. It must be the teacher's task, gradually to develop higher standards of critical judgment by comparison of the good with the bad, the better with the good, and the best with the better. This in itself will tend to stimulate the pupil to new, intelligent and constant effort and will make for self-discipline, for he will set for himself his rules of conduct and action — not for their own sake, but for the purpose of accomplishing the object of his desire.

By this means of self-established, self-enforced discipline he will master each difficulty as it presents itself as an obstacle to satisfactory expression. He will not create difficulties which do not yet exist, but will meet them and overcome them when they appear. The old method of practicing all kinds of exercises for their own sake, that is, for the purpose of finger-strengthening, etc., has often done more harm than good; for, while they may have developed strength, they have destroyed other valuable individual characteristics of touch and tone. And this simply because they were practiced apart from an immediate musical necessity, whereas, when practiced in relation to a musical purpose, not only strength, but all the other subtler qualities demanded by this purpose will be acquired.

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

It will be seen from this that all arbitrariness on the part of the teacher in imposing irrelevant practice material is unwise, not only because it fails in producing the best musical results, but also because it retards the pupil's development in self-criticism, self-activity and resourcefulness — in short, in self-discipline.

The teacher should therefore not be an autocrat but the pupil's guide, philosopher and friend. Not above him, but beside him; not the domineering, scolding despot, but the sympathetic, encouraging counsellor.

* *

*

The unwilling,
lazy pupil

Here some one may ask: "What about the unwilling, lazy pupil? or the careless, thoughtless one who lacks steadiness of purpose and mental concentration?" The answer is, If he is unwilling, it is because he lacks interest; if lazy, because his desire to learn is weak; if careless, because he is not self-critical; if thoughtless, because he has been given nothing to think about; if lacking in steadiness of purpose, because that purpose is not sufficiently clear and attractive; if lacking in concentration of mind, because that quality has not been developed from the beginning. In other words, it is either the teacher's fault, or the pupil should not study music. To try to

remedy these defects by force, that is, by insisting upon so and so many hours of unwilling, mechanical work, is simply stupid. Better results would be secured by the purchase of a mechanical musical instrument. It would, however expensive, cost less than years of unprofitable instruction in music.

* *

*

Reducing the problem of how to study music to its simplest terms it resolves itself into the formula: *First think, then do, then think again.* That is, first conceive clearly what you want to express, then express it as adequately to this conception as possible, and then compare the original conception with this expression. If this has been entirely adequate, pass on to the expression of the next thought; if not, try to find the reason for this inadequacy and attack the obstacle *before* venturing a repetition of the musical thought in an inadequate form of expression. For if the inadequate form is repeated, it may become confirmed. If the obstacle is lack of skill in performance of some detail, it is proper to repeat this detail, upon which must be concentrated the best critical thought, until it is brought to the perfection of which the performer is capable and into proper relation to

General
formula of
study

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

its musical environment. If, on the other hand, the obstacle lies in a misconception of tempo, rhythmic values, dynamics or emotional qualities, the pupil should discover his errors by the light of the teacher's guidance and should himself find the way to a true conception.

This is the philosophy of study in a nutshell and, while volumes might be written elaborating the details as applied to every conceivable problem which might present itself, the principle underlying the solution of these problems will always be the same. *Conception, action, criticism*; this is the formula of study. It is applied first to the exposition as a whole, then the same process indicated by the formula is applied to each part as represented by the musical thoughts of which it is composed; then it is applied to each subdivision of each thought, until every detail has been made adequate to express its proper share in the expression of the whole.

* *

*

System

It requires no "method," labelled or unlabelled, to apply this principle, but it is based on *system*, that is, on an orderly sequence of thought and action. All work should be systematic to ensure directness of purpose and

economy of time and strength. For this reason it is also advisable to systematize the working hours of each day. Much time is frittered away unwittingly in ways which conduce neither to pleasure nor profit. The student should devise a programme for his daily work, play and rest. These should alternate so that, according to the physical and mental powers of the student, longer or shorter periods of concentration are succeeded by relaxation. Also in such a manner that longer periods of work are divided into shorter ones of different kinds of occupation, by which means certain faculties are rested while others are in action.

Such systematic, programmatized work is not only conducive to the regular exercise of the mental and physical faculties, to the steadying of the nerves and to the general feeling of happiness, but it is also of great cumulative power—the small, regular progress of each day producing big results at the rate of compound interest by the end of the year.

* *

*

To sum up, then, the elements of correct study are *interest, effort, concentration, discipline and system*. The teacher who develops these need not worry about “teaching” his pupil this or that “piece.” The pupil will do the work, the teacher need only guide.

**General
elements
of correct
study**

CHAPTER V

CORRELATION OF PRACTICAL WITH THEORETICAL WORK

This would seem to be an unnecessary chapter, in view of the emphasis placed in the foregoing upon the importance of developing the intellectual and physical processes simultaneously; but the contrary method, namely, physical first, then intellectual, is so generally practiced that a brief, special reference may not be out of place.

We have seen that even a very young student will have no difficulty in learning the meaning of so-called technical names, provided these are associated with concrete musical conceptions or phenomena thoroughly familiar to him. That being the case, when once such conceptions have been named, the teacher should always employ these names in order that the student may automatically call to mind the musical phenomena for which they stand. Thus, the names of the tones contained in each scale, the names of the intervals, triads, chords of the seventh, etc.

When the student begins the study of Harmony, he should be made to recognize each chord and progression in the music he is

Correlation of Practical with Theoretical Work

studying. He should learn to recognize and name each cadential progression and its relation to the phrase or period in which it occurs. If this is done from the beginning it will not be irksome, but intensely interesting; and not only will his work in interpretation be more intelligent, but he will look upon the study of Harmony not as dry and "mathematical," but as delightful and illuminating.

To the objection that there is no time in a lesson to attend to all these things we would reply that the only thing that concerns the teacher is to give the pupil a thorough grasp or understanding of what he is to do; the rest must be done by the pupil. The lesson is for illumination, not for practice. If progress seems slow, it is so only apparently, for such work develops power of self-help in the pupil, and that will ensure true, steady and normal progress.

CHAPTER VI

PEDAGOGIC MATERIAL

Pedagogic material should be selected with a view to its suitability to the pupil's age, mental and physical maturity; its ability to arouse and maintain his interest; its adaptability to the formation of taste; and, finally, to meet the requirements of his technical development.

Great skill, experience, and a wide knowledge of musical material are required in the selection of material for study. The things the teacher studied as a student may or may not be advisable material — at any rate, not for all his pupils. Moreover, it will not suffice to go to the music-dealer and select at random things which have certain musical qualities and are of a certain degree of difficulty or "grade." The teacher must study each individual pupil's needs, and when he knows exactly what is needed he must search his mind or the music-store until he finds it.

The singing-teacher may require a certain type of *solfeggi* to develop proper phrasing, breathing, intonation, etc. Simultaneously with these he devises certain exercises which have a bearing on these points and the musical purpose of which the pupil is led to recog-

nize. The violin-teacher selects certain types of studies which, while in themselves musical, contain an immense amount of technical material for practice. Here his insight and influence will be constantly needed to ensure that the pupil will not ignore the musical purpose in his pursuit of technical skill.

The material at the piano-teacher's disposal is so enormous as to be embarrassing. It is therefore all the more important that he should have in his mind very clearly the exact requirements of his pupil. There are myriads of exercises and studies, most of them excellently written; but too often they are rattled off mechanically, book after book, without resulting in any real musical progress, that is, in the acquisition of power to express, to interpret music. Yet these same exercises, if culled judiciously for specific purposes at proper times, would be eminently proper. In other words, exercises and studies are excellent and helpful when they are studied for specific musical purposes and application — not for the development of purely mechanical skill.

* *

*

A very important object in the selection of pedagogic material should be the formation of taste.

**Formation
of Taste**

No matter how simple the song or piece selected, it should bear the hallmark of true art, i. e., sincerity and beauty. Nothing should ever be given to the pupil "for show." A Liszt Rhapsody which, under the hands of a master, may breathe the martial spirit of the Hungarian patriot, becomes a vulgar travesty when rattled off by the immature student, as is too often the case.

The teacher's field of choice embraces the so-called Classic, Romantic and Modern Schools of music. In the Classic the centre of gravity lies in Form. It is usually characterized by simplicity in outline and thematic material.

The Romantic School places the emphasis on the contents, and, while retaining the Classic form, gives it greater freedom. It frequently associates its musical expression with definite poetic ideas.

The Modern Schools show infinite variety in Form or lack of Form. The best of them have discovered valuable additions to musical means of expression, but the majority seem to be groping in the dark. For this reason great care should be taken by teachers to be discriminating in this class of selections.

The two first-named classes will supply the most suitable material and a judicious alternation of Classic with Romantic will best serve

Formation of Taste

the purpose of musical, technical and æsthetic advancement.

Teaching material will group itself chiefly under the following heads:

Studies (Études, Solfeggi).

Songs — Song-forms.

Dance-forms.

Sonatinas.

Inventions.

Sonatas.

Fugues.

Fantasias and other free forms.

If every selection given to the pupil for study is made to yield all it contains in musical, technical and æsthetic features, his progress will be sound and great. In addition, he should be made acquainted with such biographic and historic items as may be commensurate with his comprehension.

* *

*

A most valuable means of developing the student's musical qualities is the performance of concerted music. The singer should use every opportunity to sing duets, trios, etc., alternating in taking an outer or middle part. The instrumentalist should cultivate all forms of chamber music. Nothing contributes more

**Ensemble
practice**

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

to the formation of good taste and to the development of the true feeling of rhythm, correct dynamics, proper phrasing, fluent sight-reading and, in fact, of all the musical qualities. The only danger is a temptation to develop inaccuracy through cursory reading, but that can, of course, be avoided by the serious study of such works.

CONCLUSION

All of the foregoing has been addressed to the young teacher who, desirous of starting on the right road, needs a few guide-posts to indicate the direction and the goal. It is not addressed to the experienced, successful teacher who has traveled along the paths indicated in these pages, and who, therefore, does not need to be shown the way, or to him who has followed other paths in opposite direction, but is satisfied with his achievements; in which case, again, he would not be willing to change either his direction or his goal.

It has not been the author's object to enter exhaustively into details; partly, because to do so would have distracted attention from the few simple but all-important principles which form the foundation of correct teaching; and partly, because it would have deprived the young teacher of the joy of discovery, the satisfaction of working out the problems arising in the application of these principles in practical teaching and the individuality and personal quality of his work.

For only in this way does the teacher become a creator. His work is not done by stencil or by rote, but is each day newly designed — according to each pupil's need. This

Some Essentials in the Teaching of Music

entails no end of study of the pupil, of his problems, of his abilities and possibilities, of his needs in the way of musical material of study, and of other intellectual and æsthetic influences. To do these things properly requires time, and therefore no young teacher should teach more than three or four pupils a day. He needs all the rest of the time for preparation. It is only the older, experienced teachers who can teach nearly all day and still do justice to their work. When young teachers do so, it usually means that their work is mechanical, machine-like, and of little musical or artistic value.

The noblest of all professions is that of the teacher, but especially of the teacher of the art of music; for, if he does his work well, he develops in his pupils not only certain physical and intellectual faculties to a high degree of perfection, but he furthers the awakening and growth of their spiritual faculties. He teaches them to recognize and appreciate beauty and truth and to express them through music so that their message reaches the hearts of all who can hear.

Knowing that this high mission is entrusted to him, it should not be possible for an aspiring young teacher to be satisfied with the hum-drum grind and drudgery of the ordinary "music-teacher" who is content to sell his

time at so much an hour and gives in return only a shoddy imitation of a real music-lesson.

His work must be alive, joyous, interesting and inspiring. It may not produce immediate pecuniary affluence, but it will secure peace of mind in the thought of the day's work well done; will gain the confidence and love of the pupils; and will ultimately lead to a position of authority, respect and economic competence in the community.

Finally, I would suggest that he adopt and live up to the motto emblazoned on the Seal of the Institute of Musical Art of the City of New York:

Προθυμεώμεθα τὰ καλὰ

“Let us devote ourselves (with eager striving and enthusiasm) to noble and beautiful works.”



University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 047 208 4

Univer
Sou
Li